

A new study released by Rep. Henry A. Waxman finds that federally funded pregnancy resource centers often mislead pregnant teens about the medical risks of abortion, telling investigators who posed as pregnant 17-year-olds that abortion leads to breast cancer, infertility, and mental illness.

87 percent of the centers reached by investigators provided false or misleading information about abortion.

Under the Bush Administration, pregnancy resource centers, which are also called “crisis pregnancy centers,” have received over \$30 million in federal funding. The new report assesses the scientific accuracy of the information they provide. Female investigators, who posed as pregnant 17-year-olds seeking advice about an unintended pregnancy, telephoned the 25 pregnancy resource centers that have received capacity-building funds from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Twenty of the 23 centers reached by the investigators (87%) provided false or misleading information about the health effects of abortion. According to the report:

- **The centers provided false and misleading information about a link between abortion and breast cancer.** There is a medical consensus that induced abortion does not cause an increased risk of breast cancer. Despite this consensus, eight centers told the caller that having an abortion would in fact increase her risk. One center said that “all abortion causes an increased risk of breast cancer in later years,” while another told the caller that an abortion would “affect the milk developing in her breasts” and that the risk of breast cancer increased by as much as 80% following an abortion.

- **The centers provided false and misleading information about the effect of abortion on future fertility.** Abortions in the first trimester, using the most common abortion procedure, do not pose an increased risk of infertility. However, seven centers told the caller that having an abortion could hurt her chances of having children in the future. One center said that damage from abortion could lead to “many miscarriages” or to “permanent damage” so “you wouldn’t be able to carry,” telling the caller that this is “common” and happens “a lot.”

- **The centers provided false and misleading information about the mental health effects of abortion.** Research shows that significant psychological stress after an abortion is no more common than after birth. However, thirteen centers told the caller that the psychological effects of abortion are severe, long-lasting, and common. One center said that the suicide rate in the year after an abortion “goes up by seven times.” Another center said that post-abortion stress suffered by women having abortions is “much like” that seen in soldiers returning from Vietnam and “is something that anyone who’s had an abortion is sure to suffer from.”

Documents and Links

- [False and Misleading Information Provided by Federally Funded Pregnancy Resource Centers](#)